Dear Howard, Ken Brooten's visit to you 11/29/76

Your mailing of the 26 is timely. Today's mail is light. I'll use the time to be more explcit than I have been in the carbons, if you've had time to read them.

On the xerox of the story on Sprague's appearance at the Press Club breakfast you had Ken Brooten's card and your note saying he had stopped off to see you for a moment, "would like to get together with me later to talk to me about the JFK case and said he had my letter to Sprague. I told him I'd be glad to talk."

You probably sent me your letter to Sprague. I do not recall it.

This takes me back to the Wecht flap. You were less mature, less experienced then, so then I had to be more careful not to influence your decision. While I feel somewhat the same way now and assume you will do what you believe to be right, I'm not going to be as indirect because with your added maturity there is not the need and it requires too much time.

In a sense this reminds me of Bobby Kennedy's apt corruption of Dante (good authority for it not being real, our classics expert Ernabel) about that special corner of hell reserved for those who in time of great moral crisis and so forth.

When Brooten returns I think you should tell him that you refuse to have anything to do with the committee under the existing conditions and attribute this directly to me, telling him I have sent you carbons of what I wrote, or at least some, and that as a to-be lawyer you are offended at the lack of concern for legal rights, if you agree with me because it is even more offensive when it comes from the Congress.

I've probably not sent you copies of the Sprague letters. JL has all and can make them easier.

If you have any questions on the legal-rights issue by all means ask them. The newest, on John Ray, is a clear sign of where they are going and why.

You should know that they have already made a mess it will be hard to clean up and that they are running with the Lane disinformers on King, with the FBI's and State's and whore writers' doctrine and belief; and with the nuts only on JFK.

As of today they have yet to ask me for a singly record on JFK or a single one of my books except that I think Jeremy Akers bought a Frame-Up when he was here toward the end of October. They did not ask me for anything from my files on King. I offered what I thought they should have to Akers, the transcripts of the evidentiary hearing and the guilty-plea hearing. When I can't find time for the writing I want to return to I am ahead personally on this. When I'd be giving away the result of much unpaid effort I suffer no personal loss. However, do I have to ask you to tell yourself what this really means and represents? Especially when they are so close to me, can get here so easily?

On 10/20 their research director, who I know from his ripoff days with Abzug, told me the first of the coming week he'd be taking a room at the Frederick Holiday Inn, would be equipped with his own xerox machine, and expected to stay there until he copied all he wanted. This was not at my invitation. We just assumed it. This was after I had written by request as you know and had been told by Bud, then Downing's closest on this, that my proposals on approach had been agreed to.

By telling Sprague I'd have no more to do with them under t e existing conditions is only a week old so that does not explain any of this. They refused to pick up Jim's and the State of Tennessee's pleadings before 6th circuit when the made dates to do it and broke them. Sprague agreed, saying he did not want his staff to be prejudiced! By court records, of both sides?

You would have heard from them anyway, particularly from Brooten who can see you and get repaid for all his trips home. But after the buildup I gave them you should expect to hear from more than him. I think I told xxx you I advised them to get your book alone as the staff primer on JFK. 10/20.

Brooten and I had a long phone conversation 11/7, when he bragged about working on a Sunday. I was then pretty heavy on the Ozer deal. Brooten's response was an honest one, that he would not give his word if he felt he could not keep it. He also let Sprague know immediated, another+. But he called to ask me about the spectro case, which he learned about only from your book - three weeks after we met. In the ensuing three weeks no other word, no request for copies of the records, etc. But in that same time they took Groden to Dallas for his inquiry into the Lovelady shirt. They had him before the committee to gush that uck in which he still persists about what is in the Z film. This is the way to inform the Members? It is the Aprague et al way. And Ozer to tell them lies about the time and reason for the destruction of records and how the rifle found at Canipe's fired the ing shot so they can solve that case and Sprague to tell them they can solve it because the killer is alive. So they investigate a Memphis crime in Chicago and along the Canadian border and want to by talking to the Rays but not Jim or me. This, very obviously, is Lane and their bedding together. (I have a note today saying he has a piece in Midnight dated 12/6.)

If you need more for a catalogue of horrors ask.

My view is that we must disassociate for two reasons: to preserve our own integrity and whatever the future may make possible; and to pressure them to detach from the buts and paranoids and make the effort to be responsible. There is not one think they have done of which I know that is the right thing in a serious, responsible investigation. They are doing the wrong things by intent and are not doing the right things deliberately. Any help to them, no matter how slight, give them cover for this wretched thing they are about.

There is no cause for ecstacy from the staff. Do I have to tell you about the Members? One, Ford of Tennessee, is considering resigning. Grazier than Downing and Gonzalez on this subject they can t be, with the odds that Gonzalez will replace Downing next year. Then there is Devine, who is a former FBI agent. And Fauntroy, who now knows what he did with Lane, from more than me (not even acknowledgement of my letter).

The other black Members have all been approach and all are silent. Yes Payne spoke to Stokes and I think Burke. Floyd spoke to Fauntroy's a.a. and to Burke personally. As of today I have not heard from a single member and have had not even an indirect acknowledgement from Downing in response to the memos asked of me for him. While among decent people this would be a complaint, it is not and it is not my point. It says that the nuts and self-promoters and self-seekers have them all locked in.

Sprague ish able, clever, even cunning, but he is not a good person. He typifies all that is wrong with the worst of professional prosecutors, which is what he is. He makes fines speeches and writes lawyers' letters, evasively. He gives his word and then breaks it, with Jim and me having broken the word he gave us 11/17 on 11/16. He even appears on the same show as McMillan, only not in the same segment, only the same show and the same time, giving McMillan the prestige of his shilling the show. More on this if you want.

How does he run an investigation? By going for all the disinformation operations and not asking those who may know anything about them. I illustrate with the Pist's ~~one~~ second one, the Mexican tap on LHO via the tap on the USSR, not new at all but apparently new to them. I have no objection to calling Phillips in to testify. Ordinarily at the putset, where the meetings are organizational, I'd have none about executive sessions. But when this clearly is disinformational they do it in executive session? Why? We thus have the commissions all over again, the same vices by the same kinds of careerists people. Then they rush off to ~~xxxxx~~ Mexico. Fine for fun by not at this stage for investigation or from need. To question a typist and a translator. If they have been there that long they are career people. The executive branch would fly them up and that investigative money could be saved. The time to use it to go to Mexico could be saved for when they know enough to go there and what to look for when there. These people don t even know the ~~xxx~~ fundamentals or don t want to follow them. This also means it will not be in the form of testimony, will not be available except in the secret files that will be buried. Great.

For the spooks and the propagandists. In a sense this is worse than the WC. They at least deposed those to whom they spoke and left a record. In this sense the early indications are that Sprague and/or this committee are not going to leave a record for devils loving scripture.

I've already written about other aspects of this. But I do want to emphasize that the same people are doing to these people exactly what they did under the Commission and with this gang's assent are getting away with it. The result will be the same. Acceptance of the same trick twice in two weeks is a clear reading on the committee and on Sprague, ranging from sophistication to courage to integrity and including silent acceptance. As a sign for the future only this is terrible.

I don't have to read Binder's peice I'm glad to get. I will read it, of course. But it has to be another aspect of thesame thing. I've heard him say it. Waste of time. Maybe hedged a little.

We have seen more than enough of the real Sprague, the one the ACLU described accurately. He begins by giving me his word on approach and then does not keep it. He is not the kind to change or admit his own error. He keeps xxxxxx repeating the same ones and lying about them. Having learned that Lane means disaster he stays with Lane and repeats the masochism. Learning what Oswald really is his first act thereafter is to have him lie to the members. As he then also did himself.

At this point and on this Jim phoned. He has Sprague's word on the withdrawal or holding in abeyance of the subpoena on defense counsel. I forgot to remind him it was returnable today. He is now not alone in being worried about Sprague. Policoff, who began as his fan, confessed this by phone last night to Jim. Jim says we are seeing another - Garrison. I reminded him of the impression in my first memo, the day I met Sprague.

We are seeing the real Sprague, not the neophyte lost in a new field. I told Jim what I am writing you and he said only "Yes" several times. If Sprague has time for the press and all those TV appearances he has time to confirm to a lawyer in writing about holding off on subpoenaes.

I'm sorry I did not have time to thing this through because I think it can be important to you personally as well as to those few of us who are responsible. I think it is Henry V who referred to "we few" before he went ahead to xxxx xlobber the French. If so it is appropriate. And very important for the country and for decency.

I've also been interrupted several times, the last by one of my favority young women, one of two small but chubby AU sophomores. She looks on me as sort of a second father, her roomate on all as that kind of mother. From another of my young women friends of whom I'M fond I have just received a xeroxxx of someone's neat lettering of this from Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing." "We few" and = "enough" if we can be unified in what we perceive, believe and ar willing to do. Or try.

Jim's personal situation is more complicated than mine. He has to preserve an open channel as long as he can for Ray, to whom he bears a lawyer's oblication. I consider that in doing as I have - and believe me will - I am meeting mine. I am without doubt that you will meet yours as you see it. I'm hoping you will see it as I do.

Best,